

**The Idealization of Three Lives Cut Short:
Popular Reaction to the Lives and Deaths of
John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Princess Diana**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

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Abstract

John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Princess Diana all lived within the public sphere, with their actions critiqued by the media and the general public alike. Then, their tragic early deaths, in 1963, 1980, and 1997, respectively, brought parallel public reaction: widespread grieving and a sense of regret for lost opportunities. People chose to create saintly images of them and felt cheated of the contributions that these three people could have made to the world. Even as time passes, the public remains respectful of, and interested in the impact that John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Princess Diana had on the world.

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Introduction

Certain moments in all of our lives leave lasting impressions. Some of these moments are personal milestones, such as high school graduation, marriage, or the birth of a child. Other moments that fall into this category are not only felt personally, but they are felt by the rest of the world as well. There are certain events that have occurred that have affected people to the point that they can describe in detail what they were doing when they heard this news. This paper will focus on three such events.

During the years 1963, 1980, and 1997 the world suffered tragedy when three prominent figures were killed. The United States lost its President, Rock and Roll had to learn to live without one of its greatest contributors, and England grieved for its beloved Princess. The sounds of these events were loud and abrupt. Two of them rang in the world's ears in the form of gunshots, and the third was witnessed with the screeching of tires and the destruction of metal. All that was left behind was the silence of shock, and then an outpouring of grief. People of the world mourned for their losses and then they had to find a way to move on.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

John Fitzgerald Kennedy's journey into history books began in 1917 when he was born in Brookline, Massachusetts (Lord 21). He was a sickly child who had to battle numerous illnesses, including scarlet fever (Hellmann 10). His illnesses were not aided by the strain that he placed on himself trying to pull out from the shadow of his older brother, Joe Jr. (Hellmann 11). He wanted to be his own person. He chose to stand out by rebelling against the way his parents expected, and wanted him to act (Hellmann 16). It was said that "John Kennedy would always carry with him the insecurities that developed from the clash between his inadequate body and a demanding family" (Hellmann 35). The demands that were placed on John Kennedy became much greater

when the duty of attaining a successful political career was placed on his shoulders. This duty had originally belonged to his older brother, Joe Jr. However, when Joe Jr. was killed during World War II the responsibility was passed on to John (Berry 2).

John Kennedy's road to becoming President of the United States began in Congress. In 1946, he was elected Congressman of Massachusetts's Eleventh Congressional District, and he remained in the House for three terms (Lord 36). Then, in 1952 Kennedy decided to enter the Senate race. The odds were not in his favor, but he still secured victory through the assistance of his family (Lord 46). Four years later, Kennedy's popularity was soaring. "He was the most sought after" speaker in the Democratic party (Lord 62). Due to a boost in confidence from his speaking engagements and landslide victory in the 1958 Senatorial election, Kennedy set his sights on the presidential election of 1960 (Berry 45).

During the three years that John F. Kennedy was President of the United States important events occurred, and there was evidence that America was a nation in the midst of change. President Kennedy had successfully implemented the Peace Corps; he had achieved a successful outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis by standing up to Russia and communism, and he was instrumental in the signing of the Treaty of Moscow in 1963 (Hellmann 140; Lord 116, 199, 213). President Kennedy also experienced failure. His failures were strongly felt in the domestic arena when he was unable to pass legislation pertaining to Medicare and minimum wage (Lord 109). There were also issues that President Kennedy did not have an opportunity to resolve. In 1963, the Civil Rights Movement was encompassing the nation, and the issue of what was happening on the other side of the world in Vietnam was moving to the forefront. President Kennedy had gotten America involved in Vietnam when he sent troops over there in 1961 and 1962 to fight communism (Hellmann 141). However, these two issues of the Civil Rights Movement, and Vietnam were left for President Johnson to contend with when he assumed the presidency.

On November 22, 1963, in the streets of Dallas, Texas, the questions that had been circulating about what President Kennedy would accomplish while in office were forever silenced when his life was ended. The hopefulness that this young President had brought with him into the highest office in the land was shattered. That day was etched into the memory banks of everyone alive at that time. Even the people born after that day know about its occurrences and lasting impact through stories that they have heard.

My thoughts and impressions pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy were formed early in my life. I can remember hearing about many historical events from my dad while I was growing up. He has always been a history buff; after all, history was his major in college. However, November 22, 1963, is distinct in his mind for another reason besides its historical significance. That day was my dad's 16th birthday. Normally a person's 16th birthday is marked with excitement over the anticipation of obtaining a driver's license. What should have been one of the happiest days of my dad's teenage years was instead marked with tragedy.

In my mind I have always seen the connection between my dad's birthday and President Kennedy's death as unique although I now know that many other people around the world were celebrating their 16th birthdays that day as well. Through my research I have found that this desire to perceive connections between one's personal life and the life of the President, and his family, was very common. It was a way for people to grieve, and to accept the reality of the situation.

John F. Kennedy was perceived by the public as more than just a President. He was a family man, and a person like everyone else. When people began trying to accept the reality of his death, these were the aspects of his life to which they turned for support. They had seen him as a good father, so they sympathized with what this loss would mean for his children, Caroline and John Jr. (Greenberg 115). Members of the public also kept a close watch on his widow, Jacqueline, and they used the strength that she showed for support. Her example helped the rest of the world as they shared her loss (Mayo 47).

Along with the familial connection that many people felt with Kennedy, others also had felt a religious tie with him. He had been bold in declaring his Catholic faith, and fellow Catholics could see a part of themselves in him for that reason (Greenberg 116). Overall, many people reacted to Kennedy's death on a personal level. In their hearts it felt like they had just lost a family member (Greenberg 229).

The closeness that people felt with President Kennedy could easily be seen as having been influenced by the new found technological advances occurring during the 1950s and 1960s. John F. Kennedy has been titled the first television president. He enjoyed using the new medium of television to convey his ideas and his personality to the American public (Berry 141-2). It was no surprise that the public, in return, enjoyed watching President Kennedy on television. He possessed the qualities that the famous actors of the time had. He was handsome, and he knew how to carry himself with poise (Hellmann 90). Not only did television allow people to watch President Kennedy deliver his eloquent speeches, it was through television that many people learned of his death.

The news of President Kennedy's death quickly spread throughout the world by word of mouth and the media. Over the course of the 35 years since that tragic day in Dallas occurred, many people have been asked what their initial reaction was upon hearing the news. One word has repeatedly been used to describe their states of mind; that word is shock. People weren't sure what to think or what to do. One thing that needed to be done immediately was to inform members of the Kennedy family, if they hadn't already heard. The Senate was in session on November 22, 1963, and John Kennedy's younger brother, Edward "Teddy" Kennedy, was there. It was a Senate employee, Richard Riddell, who told Teddy the news (Mayo 39). As the rest of the Senate heard the news, their comments and reactions began to be seen on television screens around the world (Mayo 40). The state of shock that these events created translated into silence that brought with it an uneasy feeling of calmness, although the

silence didn't last long (Greenberg 226). People began expressing their emotions, which included anger and fear.

The anger that was expressed was focused on the person responsible for the President's death (Greenberg 125). For most people that meant pointing their fingers at Lee Harvey Oswald as the guilty party (Greenberg 121). Then, as people stared at their television screens at the face of Oswald, he was shot down right before their eyes (Lord 271). Along with the anger that was felt, there was also a sense of fear. People questioned the safety of a society where the President could be shot. Many people viewed the United States as a safe-haven, a place where acts like the one that had just occurred did not happen. For many people, that sense of security was gone (Greenberg 226). Then, with the murder of Oswald this fear swelled as the violence seemed to be uncontrollable (Greenberg 120).

Following Lee Harvey Oswald's death, the case of who had killed President Kennedy and why it had been done remained open. The public wanted to know who Oswald was. More questions began to form, such as, was Oswald the only gunman, and had the United States government been involved in the assassination? President Johnson wanted to try to put the nation's minds at ease, so he organized the Warren Commission to investigate Kennedy's death. After approximately one year of investigation the report concluded that there had been a single assassin, which was Oswald, and that he had fired three shots (Lord 269). However, this report did not silence the questions that there had been a conspiracy; in fact, it caused some people to ask even more questions. Since the time of the assassination there have been books written and movies made about the various theories that people have about what really was behind the events that took place on that day in Dallas.

The books that have been written about the conspiracy behind Kennedy's assassination point fingers at numerous groups. One of these books, Who killed JFK?, was written by Carl Oglesby, a known libertarian (Harris 1). In this book he names six

different groups that could have been responsible. These groups are the Soviets, Castro's Cuba, the Mafia, the Mongoose team, the Cowboys, and the Nazis. Most of the other books that have been written on this topic focus in on one group as the prime suspect. In my research, I found that the CIA's speculated involvement seemed to be the most common topic in these books. The books Plausible Denial, by Mark Lane, and JFK, by Col. L. Fletcher Prouty, both focus around the CIA's suspected plot to kill President Kennedy. Prior to the publication of JFK, Prouty's name was already known around Washington DC due to his extensive military career. He claims that this book, along with others that he has written on different subjects, are based on inside information that he has learned through his classified business dealings in Washington (Osanic 1). Prouty's book about the JFK assassination was turned into a movie that was directed by Oliver Stone, in 1991. The idea of a conspiracy behind the assassination of President Kennedy was no longer just an idea that was occasionally talked about; twenty-eight years after it happened a theory was being presented to the world on the big screen. Even if people chose to not go to see the movie, it is easily assumed that they heard about its contents from someone who had seen it. This movie, while it contained facts, also expressed unfounded theories. However, this had not been the first movie to be based on the idea of an assassination conspiracy. In 1973, Executive Order, directed by David Miller, addressed this same issue; however, instead of the CIA being behind the plot, a wealthy group of power-brokers were to blame. There have also been many movies that have mentioned the idea of a conspiracy in passing, instead of having an entire movie revolve around it. Just last year, in 1998, in the blockbuster movie *Armageddon* there was a comment made about the government's perceived involvement in the Kennedy assassination. The characters in the movie are preparing to go on a mission for the United States government to save the world. Before they will go on the mission they make a list of requests of what they would like in return for their services. One of their requests is to be told who really killed President Kennedy, but that request isn't fulfilled.

In my opinion, as people continue to believe that there was a conspiracy involved in the assassination of President Kennedy, they are looking to find a meaning behind his death. People want to believe that this wasn't just an act of violence by one man. Instead, they want to believe that it was an action with a purpose.

People were caught up with the motives behind the assassination from the beginning; however, the nation chose to not focus on it right away. Instead, people were busy grieving, and part of that process consisted of remembering and discussing the content of President Kennedy's character. At that time people were not discussing his flaws, or things that he could have done differently. Kennedy was being remembered as "a man of exceptional character and a President of heroic proportions" (Greenberg 127). President Kennedy was being praised from all corners of the world. These praises were heard and recognized at a special meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on November 26, 1963, where each member present expressed his/her thoughts on President Kennedy's death (U Thant 1). I have read these speeches and pulled from them some quotes that I found to be particularly poignant. H. E. Mr. Carlos Sosa Rodriguez, the President of the eighteenth session of the General Assembly, from Venezuela, was the first to speak at this meeting. He expressed the feeling that the entire world had been effected by the death of President Kennedy when he said, "[n]ot only America but the whole world mourns his [President Kennedy's] passing, for by it they have lost one of those rare human beings in whom energy and generosity join to produce glorious and fruitful activity in the service of the noblest ideals" (3).

The Secretary General of the United Nations, H. E. U Thant viewed President Kennedy as a man who represented what the world should be trying to attain. He believed that Kennedy had been a man with such a strong hold on his beliefs that he would not let them go, and it was for those beliefs that he died. U Thant expressed this in his words by saying that "President Kennedy was mortal like the rest of us. Not so his place in history, where he will live as a great leader who sought peace at home and

abroad and who gave his life as a true martyr in the service of his country and of all mankind" (9).

I will mention one more speech that was made at the meeting of the General Assembly. This speech was made by H. E. Mr. Liu Chieh, from China. He was one of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly. He made mention of the impact that President Kennedy's years in office had made on the nation, and on the world because of the issues that he had chosen to focus on. The beginning of Chieh's speech included this excerpt: "President Kennedy came into his high office at a time when his country and the world were beset by momentous problems. He faced those problems with calmness, wisdom and unflinching courage. In the three brief years of his Presidency he made decisions which unmistakably influenced the course of history. He lighted beacon fires which will burn brightly in the years to come" (17).

While the reactions that came from the United Nations seemed fairly predictable, one nation's reaction that was not as expected was Russia's. The leader of Russia, Premier Nikita Khrushchev, with whom President Kennedy had dealt throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis, expressed his response to the assassination by saying that the "death of J.F. Kennedy is a heavy blow to all people who value world peace and Soviet-American cooperation." The Russians had respected Kennedy for his courage and they were saddened by his death (Lord 292).

Within the United States the assassination had different effects on various groups in society. Children were exposed to the on going news coverage on every channel on television as their parents watched for any new updates (Greenberg 200). College students had classes canceled, and when discussing the assassination they seemed to be able to have an easier time articulating what they were feeling, as opposed to the rest of the population (Greenberg 225). One group within society that was deeply affected by the President's death was Blacks. The President had just begun to get involved in the Civil Rights Movement. One statement that was made not long after the President's death

concerning what had been learned from the experience was "that the American Negro can weep with the rest of us over the death of a white man" (Lord 291).

As Americans continued to deal with the fact that they now lived in a country where their President had been assassinated, time moved on. Jacqueline Kennedy knew that there was a funeral to plan, and that is exactly what she did. She chose to have part of it emulate President Abraham Lincoln's funeral that had taken place ninety-eight years earlier (Mayo 57). Another person who knew not to let down his guard was the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson. He had to show the world that even in the face of tragedy the United States would not fall from its place of power. Although, he could not risk alienating the nation by jumping into the role of President with too much vengeance, he needed to give the nation time to grieve (Mayo 49-50).

The world was given a few days to mourn before the time came for the late President to lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda. The nation's people wanted to pay their respects to their slain President, and they had that opportunity. "The President lay in state as his people passed by- a quarter of a million of them in the twenty-one hours the Rotunda was open" (Mayo 79). The following day was marked with the funeral procession that ended at Arlington National Cemetery. At the Capitol, before the procession, 240,000 people filed past the bier (Kelly 1). During the funeral the nation stood still; people stopped their daily activities to respectfully observe the day's events (Mayo 81-82). The rest of the world paid their respects by sending representatives to the funeral. There were 53 countries represented, "and 26 of them [were] heads of state government" (Kelly 1). There is one symbol of that day that people today, and people in the future can still see to remind them of the occurrences of those fateful days in 1963. That symbol is the eternal flame that was lit by Jacqueline, and "the late President's two surviving brothers," Robert Kennedy, and Edward Kennedy (Mayo 83). When the flame was lit, the funeral was over, and it was time for the world to move on.

To move on is not at all the same as forgetting. After all, it was only five years later, in 1968, that the nation had to deal with the loss of another Kennedy when Robert was assassinated. However, as for life in the United States at the end of 1963, President Johnson kept the government in working order, and the citizens of the nation went back to work and back to their daily lives. Some people believe that the nation has continued to try to recapture the Kennedy years in the White House in order to make up for what they were robbed of when he was assassinated. "These [attempts] have ranged from the campaign of his brother Robert in 1968 to that of Gary Hart in 1984 to that of Bill Clinton in 1992" (Hellmann 146). However, in my opinion, trying to recapture the Kennedy years is like trying to solve a mystery. No one really knows what the rest of President Kennedy's time in the White House would have brought. He was assassinated in the prime of his life, when he was only 46 years old. He is forever frozen in time as the handsome leader of America's royal family. The shock that was felt throughout the world when he died resonates in the written accounts of that day in Dallas; that is why I believe that President Kennedy will not be forgotten any time soon. His memory will continue on, as will the eternal flame at his gravesite.

After writing this paper I had the opportunity to visit Arlington National Cemetery. As my friends and I approached President Kennedy's gravesite, this paper was on my mind. The emotions that I felt about the life and death of President Kennedy while I was writing this paper were intensified as I stood staring at his gravesite. There were many other visitors to Arlington National Cemetery that day. Some were older than myself, and some were school children. Everyone had the same response upon viewing the gravesite. They all became silent. A few of them whispered a word or two to someone standing next to them, but all other conversations stopped. That served as evidence to me that people greatly respect the memory of John F. Kennedy.

John Winston Ono Lennon

November 22, 1963, was a day that stunned the world because President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. On that day something else happened that was a part of the beginning of a worldwide phenomenon known as The Beatles, a band consisting of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr. On that day in Britain, The Beatles released their second full length album titled *With The Beatles* (McKeen 23). It would be a little over two months later that The Beatles would arrive in the United States with their upbeat music helping to heal the heartache of a nation (McKeen 24).

It was as a member of The Beatles that John Lennon first gained worldwide attention. His musical collaborations with Paul McCartney, along with his own works, helped The Beatles stay at the tops of musical charts for years. John Lennon also made headlines because of his drug use and outspoken political views. He then spent approximately five years out of the public eye in order to be a full time father to his son, Sean. John Lennon's return to media attention was marked with tragedy when he was murdered on December 8, 1980, in New York City.

Forty years earlier in Liverpool, England, Julia Lennon had given birth to a son. John Winston Lennon was born on October 9, 1940 (McKeen 5). Growing up, John did not have a steady home life. His father was absent from the picture, and his mother was off following her free spirit (DeWitt 73). He did spend some time being raised by his mother, but he was also sent to stay with his Aunt Mimi. Then, a few months before his eighteenth birthday his mother was killed when she was hit by a car (McKeen 5). This lack of stability shaped John Lennon's personality. "He was a behavior problem all through school, but early on found something like salvation, or at least balm, in U.S. rock 'n' roll, which he loved" (Lang 2).

John Lennon's love of music led him to form a band. After numerous name changes and member changes, the band known as The Beatles was born. Even as a part of this four man band, John Lennon's persona was easily spotted by others. He was recognized as the leader (McKeen 9). The Beatles saw their popularity rise in Europe and turned their sights toward the United States. They knew that the history of British bands being successful in America was not working in their favor. Then, on February 7, 1964, when their plane landed at John F. Kennedy airport, they knew that they had achieved success in America because there were approximately four thousand fans present to welcome them. The screaming fans at the airport were then echoed at all of The Beatles concerts that followed (McKeen 24-25).

At the time when The Beatles' popularity was on the rise, the behind the scenes aspects of John Lennon's life were also going well. He married Cynthia Powell Lennon in 1962, and it wasn't long until John became a dad. John Julian Lennon, known as Julian, was born in 1963 while John was busy touring with The Beatles. Even though John was overjoyed by the birth of his son, his schedule did not permit him to spend a lot of time with his son (Weiner 51).

The Beatles continued to tour and record new records until 1966 when a comment that John had made went to press. He said: "Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I don't need to argue that; I'm right and I will be proved right. We're [referring to the Beatles] more popular than Jesus now. I don't know which will go first--rock and roll or Christianity" (McKeen 35). It was this comment that turned the tide on The Beatles. Many fundamentalist churches had never approved of rock and roll, and this statement added fuel to the fire. Other people joined in the charge to ban The Beatles. One of the first public acts against The Beatles took place "at the end of July 1966, two weeks before The Beatles were to begin their fourth American tour." A disc jockey in Birmingham, Alabama, "organized a rally at which 'protesters' tossed their Beatles albums into a giant tree-grinding machine, turning them into dust" (Weiner 14). Demonstrations like this

took place all over the country. The Beatles proceeded with their tour anyway, but when they finished their last show they decided to not go on the road again; instead, they became a studio band.

John Lennon gave the media something else to write about during 1966. He, along with the rest of The Beatles, began speaking out about their opposition to America's involvement in the Vietnam War. However, the media chose to side-step this topic; instead, they chose to focus on the mayhem that John's Jesus comment had created (Weiner 16). John's outspokenness on the topic of the Vietnam War was just a glimpse into what his future would hold.

As John Lennon's life with The Beatles began to transform in 1966, so did his personal life. John's interest in the art world led him to meet Yoko Ono. While he was still married to Cynthia, he and Yoko began a love affair. Eventually John and Cynthia divorced, and John and Yoko made their relationship known to the public (McKeen 42). John and Yoko's names appeared together in the headlines for reasons other than their personal relationship. They were arrested for possession of marijuana. John claimed that it was a "set up," but either way his experience with drugs was not limited to that encounter (McKeen 45).

John and George were the first two members of The Beatles to take LSD (Weiner 52). Eventually, Paul and Ringo began taking LSD too. As the drug use continued among the band members, it influenced their music. There are numerous references to drugs that can be heard in their song lyrics (Wiener 35). Then, according to what Paul told the press, when they began studying with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi they changed their ways. They believed in what the Maharishi was teaching, and since he was against drug use they stopped using them. The disintegration of The Beatles, as a band, was impacted while they were with Maharishi, in 1967. They learned that Brian Epstein, their manager who had been with them since late 1961, had died. The group decided to

manage themselves, which led to more inter-group conflict, and eventually to their break-up (McKeen 39).

If John Lennon and Yoko Ono hadn't been artistic partners before the break-up of The Beatles, they were afterwards. John left behind his days of collaborating with Paul McCartney, and he fully focused on his new wife, Yoko, whom he had married on March 20, 1969. Their honeymoon made history when they decided to have "a bed-in for peace, and [they] invited the press" (Robertson 106-107). John's music began to clearly reflect his political beliefs, which included the desire for peace and an end to all forms of oppression (Fogo 10). That is appropriate since it has been said that: "Rock was the music of the young people who opposed injustice and oppression" (Weiner 3). John had reached his audience. By connecting with the people in society who shared his view, John became a symbol for what life was supposed to be like (Fogo 87).

As the 1970s began John Lennon further distanced himself from his life as a Beatle. He continued to express himself creatively through his artwork and his music. He also remained true to his political beliefs. His political activism frightened the United States government. Years after John's death the F.B.I. files on him were released. They showed that the Director of the F.B.I., J. Edgar Hoover, "ordered an around the clock documentation of Lennon's life. Hoover was acting directly on the orders of American President Richard Nixon" (DeWitt 129). It was not a secret that John opposed Richard Nixon. On March 6, 1972, John faced a fight to stay in the country when deportation proceedings were begun. However, the government's efforts were in vain as John was granted the status of a permanent resident of the United States. He and Yoko made New York City their home.

Shortly after John won his battle to remain in the United States, Yoko gave birth to their son, Sean Ono Lennon. Sean was born on October 9, 1975, on John's thirty-fifth birthday (McKeen 85). The birth of Sean triggered John's absence from the public eye for the next five years. John decided to stay at home and take care of Sean while Yoko

took care of the business aspects of their lives (Fogo 10). After John's break from the music industry, he decided that it was time to return. He had two apparent reasons for wanting to return to music. First, he had been revived physically and mentally, particularly during a trip to Bermuda. Secondly, he and Yoko were in the process of writing many new songs, and he was ready to share them with the world (Coleman 671). "In 1980, he released his first album in five years, *Double Fantasy*, a surprisingly gentle work that celebrated love and home life" (Fogo 11). Many viewed this new release as a possible musical rebirth for him (Robertson 197). John and Yoko had been working in the music studio on December 8, 1980. They returned home to the Dakota apartment building. Mark Chapman was waiting outside of the building. When he saw John, he shot him (McKeen 85). Many people have said that those gunshots not only brought the life of a musical genius to an end, but also the hope and love of the 60s (Fogo ix). John Lennon was dead at the age of forty.

The aftermath of John Lennon's death included shock, confusion, sadness, and, for some, indifference. As people began to hear the news, they gathered together to pay tribute and to try to find comfort for their pain. One place where many people gathered was the Dakota, where John had been shot just hours earlier (Fogo 44). John had represented peace and hope, and in the end his life was taken by an act of violence. People wanted an answer to that ever present question, why? Why had John Lennon been murdered?

Different conclusions have been reached about the real reason why Mark Chapman was waiting outside of the Dakota, on December 8, 1980, with a gun. One reason that has been given is that Chapman was still distraught over the comment John had made about Jesus all the way back in 1966 (Lang 3). However, that explanation is hard to accept since fourteen years had passed since that incident. Another explanation that was given for the murder involves a literary reference. Chapman felt that by "killing Lennon [he would be able] to save him, as the *Catcher in the rye* saved the children from

falling out of innocence" (Fogo 72). From a moral stand point one could easily argue that John Lennon had not been an innocent man. During his life he used drugs, and he committed adultery. How many times he did those things is not the issue. The issue is that he had flaws. When he died those flaws were not forgotten, but for many people they just didn't hold any importance. The images that were left in peoples' minds of John Lennon were of a musical genius who expressed himself through various artistic outlets, and a man who had stood up for his beliefs. That was the man that was lost (Robertson ix-x). However, not everyone mourned the death of John Lennon. "Asked about Lennon's death within days of its happening, Ronald Reagan cupped a hand to an ear and then shrugged and grinned, saying something affably inaudible toward the crowd of reporters. He obviously didn't care" (Lang 3).

The months following John Lennon's death were filled with tributes to him. His face was on the cover of numerous magazines, and *Rolling Stone* dedicated the January 21, 1981, issue to his memory. People were opening up and expressing how John Lennon's death had affected them personally. One common reaction was that people felt that they were transported back to what their lives had been like in the 60s. People felt nostalgic for their youth (Fogo 52). They realized how much time had passed since John Lennon and The Beatles had made an impact. Many people had to explain to their children who John Lennon was because they had never heard of him (Fogo 53).

Even though it has been over eighteen years since John Lennon's death, his memory and his influence are still intertwined with today's popular culture. There are books written about him, his music is still being sold, and his sons are carrying on the family name in today's music industry. These are some of the main reasons why John Lennon has been able to remain a focal point in the media, and it shows how he has been able to reach another generation. For a while John Lennon remained a symbol of the 60s, but as the years continued to pass his music reached another audience. In 1994 he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, as a solo artist, not as a member of The

Beatles, who had been inducted as a group in 1988. The following year the surviving Beatles released the first of three double CDs titled *The Beatles Anthology*. This music was a soundtrack to the NBC miniseries by the same name. Included on the CDs were two songs that had never been heard before. John had been working on them prior to his death. Yoko Ono decided to turn them over to Paul McCartney, and the rest of the Beatles decided to finish them up and release them. Through the wonders of technology John Lennon's new songs were heard (Lewisohn 4). The release of these Beatle recordings was not the only new contribution of John Lennon's music to the world following his death. Yoko Ono has said that she "continue[s] to distribute John's work for many reasons: first for John, who was a communicator/artist/musician, who would have liked for his work to go on; second, for the fans who want more, more and more; and third, for the family, including [herself], who are proud of Father John's work and would like to see his work out there for a long time to come..." (Capitol 1). In 1998 alone there was the release of the album titled *Lennon Legend: The Very Best...*, and *The John Lennon Anthology*, which is a box set.

I attribute my interest in John Lennon to the media's continuing coverage of him and his music. A logical origin of my interest in John Lennon would be that I was influenced by my parents. Both of my parents were teenagers during the 1960s when The Beatles came to America, but neither of them was a part of the Beatlemania that took place. Sure, my mom remembers watching them on the Ed Sullivan show, and Ringo was her favorite. She liked that he was the drummer because she was a drummer, but that's the extent of how much she liked The Beatles. When she looks at my posters of John Lennon and The Beatles, she jokes that I was born during the wrong generation. In my opinion, it seems more likely that the strength of what people felt for John Lennon when he was alive has survived in some forms to the present, and I am proof of that.

John Lennon's family members have continued on with their musical and artistic creativity in his absence. Yoko has remained a prominent figure in the world of art.

Also, both of John's sons, Julian and Sean, have recorded albums of their own. Even though their music is separate from their dad's, it is hard to hear either of their names without thinking of John.

People around the world continue to think about John Lennon, particularly on his birthday, and the anniversary of his death. On those days various groups gather to pay tribute to him. These tributes include candle lighting and listening to his music (Bluebond 1). These gatherings mirror the activities that occurred prior to the "ten minutes of silence around the world the following Sunday afternoon" after John's death (McKeen 86). Also, there are places that are dedicated to his memory. One of these is an area in Central Park, in New York City, that has been aptly named Strawberry Fields. Located in this area is a mosaic with the word "Imagine" written on it, representing one of John's most well known songs and his deep felt feelings.

I have had the opportunity to visit another place that has been dedicated to the memory of John Lennon. During the fall semester of 1997, when studying in England, I spent a day in Liverpool. One of the tourist attractions there is a museum called The Beatles' Story. Walking through the museum one sees memorabilia from throughout The Beatles' career. The last room of the museum is dedicated to the memory of John. I wrote down my thoughts about it in my journal. The following is an excerpt from that entry on September 15, 1997:

It was a lone room where you stand on the outside of a half wall. In the room everything was white: the curtains, the carpet, the walls, and the piano. On the top of the piano was a framed picture of John Lennon, and a pair of the circular sunglasses that he made famous. The song *Imagine* was being played, and white light faded in and out while the curtains fluttered.

Along with seeing The Beatles' Story, John Lennon's life seemed to appear before my eyes when I saw places such as, Strawberry Fields, and the Cavern Club where The Beatles first played.

My thoughts and feelings about John Lennon won't fade away any time soon. I am just as guilty as the next person of looking past his flaws and seeing the man that I would like him to have been. My view may be tainted, but it is what I see. Also, I occasionally find myself wondering what his musical style would have been like had he lived into the 1990s. No one knows the answer to that question although Yoko Ono may have some ideas. Others have chosen to accept the contributions that he made during his life, and not focus on what could have been (Fogo 51).

John Lennon's death was a tragedy, and his life had been far from perfect. "The chief Beatle was complex and tormented by his enormous creative talent. As a result of his family background, the tragedy of John Lennon was that he was unable to escape the horrors of his past. He dwelled upon the unstable, lower-class problems of his youth and this created great instability in his adult life" (DeWitt 176). Yet, somehow through all of that he emerged a legend.

For many people when they hear John Lennon's music today they are taken back to the 1960s, and the early 1970s. Those were turbulent years in American history. Americans were facing fighting abroad and at home. There were troops in Vietnam fighting against communism, which led to problems at home because not all Americans believed that their country should be involved in that struggle. Also, there was domestic turmoil as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. Among all of that fighting, John Lennon stood as a symbol of peace, and that is often how he is remembered.

My connection to John Lennon and his music is not based on having the same life experiences as he did. I don't have any idea what it would be like to stand up to the United States government for a cause that I believe in. What I do know about John Lennon is that he was able to successfully convey his feelings and beliefs through his

music. I am a person who responds to music when there is a meaning behind it that I can understand. I have joked that my heart beats to a musical rhythm. John Lennon's music reaches this part of me. I believe that I feel this way from the sincerity that I hear within his lyrics. Perhaps it is this sincerity that causes me to feel that I have missed out on something when I hear his music. There are still pioneers in the ever changing music industry, and there are artists who stand up for causes that they believe in, but I truly believe that John Lennon was an original. His life didn't follow a previously paved path; he created his own. John Lennon followed his dreams, and he was true to his beliefs. I'm still trying to figure out what my dreams and beliefs are. Knowing that John Lennon was able to leave his mark on the world while he struggled with his imperfections gives me hope that I can do the same.

Diana, Princess of Wales

On August 31, 1997, I was in Cleveland, Ohio, with friends attending a Barenaked Ladies concert, at the Taste of Cleveland Festival. When the concert was over and we returned to our car, we turned on the radio. The windows in the car were rolled down, and we were just sitting there waiting in traffic. I remember hearing a radio volume suddenly increase, and there was the announcement that Princess Diana had been killed. I told the other people in the car that I thought that was a really sick joke. The station that we had our radio tuned into hadn't said anything about the Princess; instead, music continued to play. So, we turned our music up louder and ignored the news about Princess Diana because we assumed that it was a hoax. Looking back, I have no idea what I was thinking. The thought never crossed my mind about who would benefit from that type of lie, and why someone would broadcast that information if it weren't true. The idea of Princess Diana being dead seemed so impossible that I didn't even think about it

anymore. That also seems unreal to me now. I was four days away from leaving for England. All that I had talked about and thought about that summer was related to England, but when I heard the news about the Princess all those thoughts vanished. I returned home late that night, in the early hours of the next morning. I remember thinking that it was odd that my mom was still up, and I could hear that the television was on. She started to ask me if I had heard the news; she hadn't even finished the question before the information that I had heard on that loud radio replayed in my mind, and I knew that it was true. I walked into my room, turned on my television, and sat there for the next few hours just staring at the screen unable to comprehend that Princess Diana was dead.

Diana Frances Spencer was born on July 1, 1961. She grew up in a family that was a part of the British aristocracy. Being born into a family of privilege did not guarantee happiness for Diana. One specific event during Diana's childhood that caused her heartache was her parents' separation, which took place when she was only six years old (Owen 12). Later, when Diana was sent off to boarding school she suffered from homesickness (Lacey 11). Eventually, it was due to that reason that Diana finally stopped her formal education and moved to London. She became an assistant at a kindergarten where her love of children and compassionate nature became evident (Owen 16,19).

Diana had met Prince Charles once before moving to London; however, it was after they met for a second time that a relationship began. That second meeting took place in 1979. The Press found out about their relationship in 1980, and that is when Diana's life in the spotlight began (Lacey 15). Diana was only nineteen years old, and she was on the verge of becoming the most watched woman in the world.

On February 24, 1981, the Lord Chamberlain announced the engagement of Prince Charles, to Lady Diana Spencer (Martin 164). It would only be five more months before the world would witness their fairy tale wedding. On July 29, 1981, Diana

Spencer lived out the fantasy of little girls everywhere; 750,000 people watched as she married Prince Charles and became a Princess. "There were some 10,000 street parties throughout Britain that day and almost everybody indoors had a private party" (Martin 220). Unfortunately, the happiness that characterized that day did not last forever as it does in fairy tales.

After the wedding Diana graciously settled into her new role as the Princess of Wales. It became obvious that Great Britain and the rest of the world were infatuated with the new Princess. Wherever Diana went large crowds would gather to greet her. Diana knew that traveling was part of her new lifestyle, but she also knew of something else that was expected of her. She was expected to have children. The world didn't have to wait long for Diana to become a mother. On June 21, 1982, William Arthur Philip Louis was born, and once again England had a cause to celebrate. Pictures of Prince Charles and Princess Diana with their son were images of a happy family.

The following year Diana's popularity continued to rise as her face appeared on the cover of magazines worldwide (Owen 32). The Royal Family had a new star. All eyes remained focused on the Princess as she attempted to Modernize the monarchy. The British had been losing interest in the monarchy, but Diana gave them a reason to care again (McGrath 50). The way that Piers Paul Read described Diana's appeal reflects this idea. He said, "[p]art of Diana's attraction was the human face she gave to a Royal Family that frequently seemed remote" (MacArthur 31). Lord Attenborough also recalls how Diana was able to change the perceptions that many people had about the Royal Family. He remembers when a student at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts said, "I'm not a royalist. She doesn't mean anything to me.' ... But, without exception, by the end of the day they would have joined her never-ending army of admirers" (MacArthur 80).

One thing that Diana did not lack that was often absent in the appearance of the Royal Family was compassion. Her loving nature showed through in her relationships

with her sons. Her second son, Henry Charles Albert David, known as Prince Harry, was born on September 15, 1984. Diana loved spending time with her sons. She was determined to not be the distant mother that the Queen had been to Prince Charles (Owen 58). Along with preparing Prince William and Prince Harry for their future duties within the Royal Family structure, Diana made it a point to show them what life was like for those who were less fortunate (MacArthur 60).

In 1987, people began having to face the facts that the fairy tale marriage was falling apart. Rumors about the dissolving marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales were fueled by their continued appearances apart from each other. Even when they were together their body language was far from inviting. Princess Diana was also suffering from problems of her own. People began to see that she was noticeably losing weight. It was later discovered that she was suffering from bulimia nervosa (Owen 37).

The media remained focused on Diana's physical appearance throughout her life, not because of her weight, but because of her place in the world of fashion. One writer has described Diana by saying that she "was not an outstanding original who altered the course of world fashion but she was the definition of glamour" (Mower 32). People were always curious about how Diana had her hair cut or what she was wearing. Feminists were quick to disagree with the appearance that Diana was portraying. Then, as time passed, the world realized that there was much more to Diana than her glamorous image.

In the midst of all of Diana's continuing marital difficulties she lost her father, Earl Spencer, who died in 1992. Not long after that Andrew Morton's book, *Diana: Her True Story*, arrived in bookstores. The book revealed how unhappy Diana was in her marriage and her suspicions that Prince Charles was having an affair with his long time friend Camilla Parker Bowles (Chua-Eoan 36). The publication of the book was just the beginning of the disclosures concerning the marriage between Prince Charles and Princess Diana. What followed was the release of audiotapes of telephone conversations that supported Diana's claim that Charles was having an extra-marital affair (Kantrowitz

46). It was later that year that the separation of the Prince and Princess of Wales became official. Their divorce did not follow until four years later when the Queen urged them to formally end their marriage. The public battle between Charles and Diana did not end with their separation from one another. First, Charles participated in a television interview. During the interview, he confirmed what Diana had said; he had an extra-marital affair. Diana wanted to make sure that people understood her side of the story, so she too participated in a television interview. During her interview she admitted that she had also had an affair (Owen 46).

Diana had been involved with numerous charities, and the end of her marriage allowed her even more time to devote to them. She wanted to embrace all the people that were considered to be the outcasts of society; included in this group were AIDS patients, minorities, and battered women (Kantrowitz 40). Diana touched many people's lives through her charity work. She wasn't just the speaker at fund-raisers. She interacted with people. She held out her hands and showed that she knew the importance of what human touch can do. Tony Whitehead expressed his agreement with this statement when he said that: "the most important thing she did for AIDS sufferers was holding their hands" (MacArthur 10). W.F. Deedes accompanied Diana on one of her last trips, which dealt with one of her most recent charities, the campaign against land mines. He had this to say about her: "Part of her gift in bringing comfort to those in anguish lay in this sensitive awareness of when silence is best. ... At some point during an outpouring of grief, she would stretch out a hand or both hands and touch the person on the arm or face" (MacArthur 67).

Diana truly believed in her charity work, and she was being torn by the idea that she may have to give some of it up in order to move into a more private life. Her sons remained at the top of her priority list, and she treasured the time that she spent with them. Also, her personal life had taken on a new appearance. She had a new man in her life. She had been seen with Dodi Al-Fayed, the son of billionaire Mohamed Al-Fayed,

and the smile that appeared on her face seemed to be genuine. Diana had pulled her life together after separating herself from the Royal Family.

The timing of certain events are hard to understand. People are left asking questions about her death: Why? Why did this happen? Why now? Why to this person? The occurrences of August 31, 1997, are marked by those questions. People don't understand the situations surrounding the actual events of that night. More generally, they don't understand how a tragedy like the one that unfolded that night could have happened to Princess Diana. No matter how the questions are answered, the result remains the same. Diana, Princess of Wales, was killed in a tragic car accident along with her friend, Dodi Al-Fayed, and their driver. People wanted someone to blame. At first, the Press seemed like the logical culprit. Numerous members of the Press had been chasing the car in which Diana had been riding. Later, blood alcohol tests revealed that Diana's driver had been legally drunk. Whichever of these explanations is more to blame is not the issue here. The issue is that on that night in Paris, the tragedy that occurred was not suffered by Great Britain alone. The world felt the loss of a woman who had been a devoted mother, a cultural icon, and a compassionate human being.

If people had not overlooked her faults during her life, they were all but forgotten upon her death. The following week was characterized by outpourings of grief worldwide. Everyone wanted to pay tribute to Diana. Her picture appeared on the cover of almost every magazine, and television programming all focused around her life. People all around Great Britain began leaving flowers with personal notes to the Princess attached to them. The greatest number of flowers appeared in London, surrounding Kensington, Buckingham, and St. James's Palaces. I was able to see some of the flowers that had been left in the York Minster and around Holyrood Castle in Edinburgh. There were some flowers that were hand-picked by the homeless, while others were bouquets that had been bought. Even though each message was different, their meanings were the same. Diana, Princess of Wales, was loved, and she was greatly missed.

Another way that people expressed their grief over Princess Diana's death was by signing the numerous Books of Condolences. For some people the wait to sign the books was up to seven hours long. The long wait did not deter many people. As Matthew Engel recalls, the problem wasn't the wait; it was trying to understand what was expected once a person reached the Book of Condolence. "It was not even clear who exactly we were condoling. William and Harry, of course. But who else? The Queen? Charles? Ourselves? These problems were what made the queue so slow. Many people took a long while, and composed mini-essays" (MacArthur 27).

As the people in Great Britain found ways to express their grief, leaders from around the world began to give their thoughts. President Mandela said, "Princess Diana had indeed become an ambassador for victims of land mines, war orphans, the sick and needy throughout the world. She was undoubtedly one of the best ambassadors of Great Britain" (MacArthur 18). The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, gave his thoughts on why he believed Diana had been able to touch so many people around the world. According to him, Diana "seized the imagination of young and old alike. This beautiful woman was also a very vulnerable human being and out of that vulnerability and weakness, if you like, came lots of strength, her compassion and her commitment to people" (MacArthur, ed. 19).

In a twist of fate that was hard to believe, Mother Teresa died five days after Princess Diana. They had worked together in their efforts to help the poor. That is what Mother Teresa remembered about Diana when she heard the news of her death. Her thoughts about Diana are summed up well by one statement that she made: "she [Diana] helped me to help the poor and that's the most beautiful thing" (MacArthur 19).

While leaders from around the world were paying tribute to Diana, one person who had not made her feelings publicly known was the Queen. The people of Britain were not happy with the Queen's decision to remain in private. Then, on September 5, she went before her country, and the world, and expressed her feelings about Diana's

death. The following day The Times newspaper had a review of the Queen's speech on the front page. The journalists who wrote the article were Alan Hamilton, Philip Webster and Daniel McGrory. They described the Queen's speech as "a deeply-felt personal tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales" (1). Finally, the Queen gave the people of Britain the reaction for which they had been waiting.

The day of Princess Diana's funeral the group with which I was traveling was scheduled to pass through London on our way to York. Our plans were changed in order to avoid the crowds that would be gathered to pay their respects. Even though we didn't set foot in London, the mood of the day was felt wherever we went. For example, during our train ride the conductor asked us to please observe a moment of silence to pay tribute to the Princess. Also, once we arrived in York it was evident that virtually all businesses had closed down during the hours of the funeral, and some of them remained closed for the rest of the day. The entire country stood still.

The following day, I went to the York Minster to attend a service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Diana, Princess of Wales. There were masses of people there. Every seat was taken, including extra chairs that had been brought in for the service. It wasn't until after the service that I found out that the lawns outside of the Minster had also been filled. There were speakers placed on the lawns so that everyone could follow along with the service. Even though it was one service directed towards a large quantity of people, everyone was affected individually. Some people sat in silence, while others wept. No one seemed unaffected, including myself.

As the people of Great Britain and the rest of the world found their own ways to say good-bye to Princess Diana, the passage of time has served as proof that life needed to move on. The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund was established so that all of the charity work that Diana had done would not end with her death. In reference to her charity work, Diana had once said, "I will run to anyone who calls to me in distress, wherever it is. ... Nobody can dictate my conduct. I work on instinct. It's my best

adviser" (Chancellor 26). It is this spirit that people wanted to see continued through further charity work.

The main concern on people's minds following Diana's death was for her sons. People had seen Diana as the openly loving parent; Charles had always been the more reserved parent. The nation and the world were worried that with the loss of their mother Prince William and Prince Harry would not receive as much affection as they had when Diana was alive. That is why people vocalized their sympathy to Prince William and Prince Harry. They wanted to make sure that the two boys knew that they were loved. The two Princes remained remarkably composed as they dealt with the public grief. Diana's influence on her sons was apparent (Hamilton 2).

More than a year and a half has passed since the day that the world was stunned by the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. People are still reminded of her life through books and through news of her sons. I know that I will not forget the events of those days at the end of August and beginning of September in 1997. What I saw was a nation and a world united by one woman's life... and death. Princess Diana made a difference in the lives of the people that she met and in the lives of people who only knew her through magazine and newspaper articles. I am one of these millions of people whose life she touched. What I remember about Princess Diana is a stunning woman who was not afraid to voice her opinions and fight for her beliefs. Whenever I think about Diana being gone, it saddens me and still strikes a note of disbelief within me.

Diana's memory will continue to live on in the future. The values and beliefs that she instilled in Prince William and Prince Harry will become more evident as they move towards the head of the Royal Family. In this way Diana may still be instrumental in changing the face of the monarchy. She will never be Queen, everyone knew that before her death, but people have given her their own titles, and that really means more. Diana was the Queen of Hearts, and the People's Princess.

Conclusion

The lives of John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Diana, Princess of Wales all ended abruptly. They were all young and still had much to contribute to the world. With the advent of modern medicine, the industrialized nations of the world have become accustomed to people growing old. That is why we use the word tragedy when a person dies young. People have the feeling that the world has missed out on something. There is a sense of lost opportunity in terms of what else these individuals would have accomplished.

Somehow all of the mistakes that these three people made during their lives are often forgotten. Instead, all that is left is an ideal image of a person who could do no wrong, or whose faults could easily be forgiven. Perhaps one explanation for why this occurs lies with the final action of each of their lives. John F. Kennedy and John Lennon were both murdered. Princess Diana suffered fatal injuries in a car accident. These were unjust events. They did not have control over the circumstances. The people who may not have supported them during their lives now overlook their negative feelings and, instead, feel sympathy over the sudden loss.

All three of these individuals had children who had to go through the grieving process. The grief that they experienced in front of a worldwide audience, along with the rest of their families, may have also contributed to the overshadowing of their parent's faults. John F. Kennedy had a young daughter and a young son who had to learn to live without a father. The heartache that the world felt as John F. Kennedy Jr. saluted his father's funeral procession was overwhelming. John Lennon had a teenage son, from his first marriage, and a five year old son with Yoko, whom he had left the music industry to rear. Princess Diana was the mother of two sons, including the future King of England. The world witnessed how close she had been to her children.

Along with the roles of parenthood, all three of these individuals will be remembered for who they were and the contributions that they made to society. The trials that all of them faced during their lives were different. John F. Kennedy struggled with insecurities, and yet he was able to achieve his goal of becoming President of the United States. The ideals that Kennedy stood for, in America's and the world's eyes, were comprised of youth, power, and charisma. Perhaps, he made a mistake by sending troops into Vietnam. His generation had seen the horrors of World War II, followed by the fears that Americans had concerning the Cold War. Also, Americans who were younger than Kennedy had fought in, and seen friends go off to Korea. However, by the time the situation in Vietnam became a two sided issue between people protesting America's involvement and those who agreed that it was the right choice to be involved, Kennedy was dead.

The protesters of the Vietnam War had an ally in John Lennon. He spoke out consistently against violence. He was a pacifist. As one of his most famous songs says, all he wanted people to do was "Give Peace A Chance." For John Lennon's life to have been ended by an act of violence is paradoxical. Ray Coleman, who wrote a biography about John Lennon, asks the question, "What does it mean that when you're such a pacifist you get shot?" (677). The people who related to the ideas of John Kennedy and John Lennon did not stand for the same things. Yet both men had found their audiences, and when they were killed those groups lost their leaders.

Princess Diana's generation did not face the same issues as those who matured during John F. Kennedy's and John Lennon's times. Major wars were not being fought; therefore, issues of humanity took center stage. These were the issues that Diana embraced. That is why all of humanity mourned the Princess when she died, and not just a politically oriented group.

I chose these three individuals for this paper based solely on personal reasons. They are three people whom I respect and wanted to research. No doubt I am guilty of

idealizing them into the people I want them to have been. My feelings about them are based on information that I have learned about them through reading, through stories, and through television. I have chosen to not dwell on their faults because everyone has faults. At the same time, I am not forgetting about their faults, and I'm not claiming that they were perfect. I have three questions that I have thought about, and I ask that the reader ponder them also. First, is there another young, charming, intelligent man who helped establish an American royal family by becoming President of the United States? Second, do you know of another man who helped establish rock and roll and didn't care about what people thought, who instead chose to follow his own heart, whether that meant expressing his love and affection for a certain woman, or standing up for his unfaltering belief that the world should strive for peace? Finally, do you know of another woman who stood up to a Royal Family, determined to not live with unhappiness anymore, and as a result, created her own life, while remaining a devoted mother and reaching out to people in need?

The lives of John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Princess Diana did not begin in the spotlight, but that is where they ended. The world saw each of them die violently at a young age. They will forever be frozen in time, and how each person chooses to remember them is his/her own decision. Some people may focus on what each of these individuals accomplished during their lives. Other people may be more interested with what contributions could have been made to the world if these three people had lived longer. Also, some people may choose to not look back on the lives of John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Princess Diana. They may think that it is more important to live in the present, and not in the past.

I think that there is ample evidence that people have not forgotten what John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Princess Diana stood for during their lives. People remember them by visiting places that have been dedicated to their memory, such as Strawberry Fields in Central Park, which was dedicated in 1984 to the memory of John

Lennon (Coleman 689). Also, people have given generous monetary donations to the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund so that the charity work that she began will continue.

Even though John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Princess Diana did not have the chance to achieve all of their aspirations, their children are achieving successes, and the world undoubtedly sees aspects of their parents in them. John F. Kennedy Jr. has not yet entered the world of politics, but he has not ruled it out. Even without a political career he has been able to make his mark through his business endeavors and his outspoken views about various Kennedy family scandals. Both Julian and Sean Lennon have followed their father's footsteps by entering the music industry. Also, it has been apparent that Sean holds the same peace loving beliefs that his father had. Last year, during the MTV Video Music Awards, Sean displayed these beliefs when he gave a standing ovation to the Beastie Boys who were on stage expressing their opinions opposing current United States military involvement in other nations. Also, the grace that Prince William and Prince Harry carry themselves with is quite evidently a result of their mother's influence.

This paper has looked at the lives of three individuals who achieved a great deal in short spans of time. Everyone did not share the beliefs and values that these people stood for during their lives; however, when they died the world lost three people who had the ability to capture people's attention and make a difference. The impact that they each made was confounded by their early, tragic deaths. Perhaps they would not be remembered the same way if they had lived until an old age, but that did not happen. After John F. Kennedy's funeral, his widow, Jacqueline, said this about her late husband: "So now he is a legend, when he would have preferred to be a man" (Jovich 24). John F. Kennedy, John Lennon, and Princess Diana, along with the rest of the world, could not foresee the occurrences of those tragic days in 1963, 1980, and 1997; that is why the world mourned and continues to remember three lives that were cut short.

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